neil gaiman - michael zulli - dick giordano - bryan talbot - mark buckingham

THE SANDMAN™

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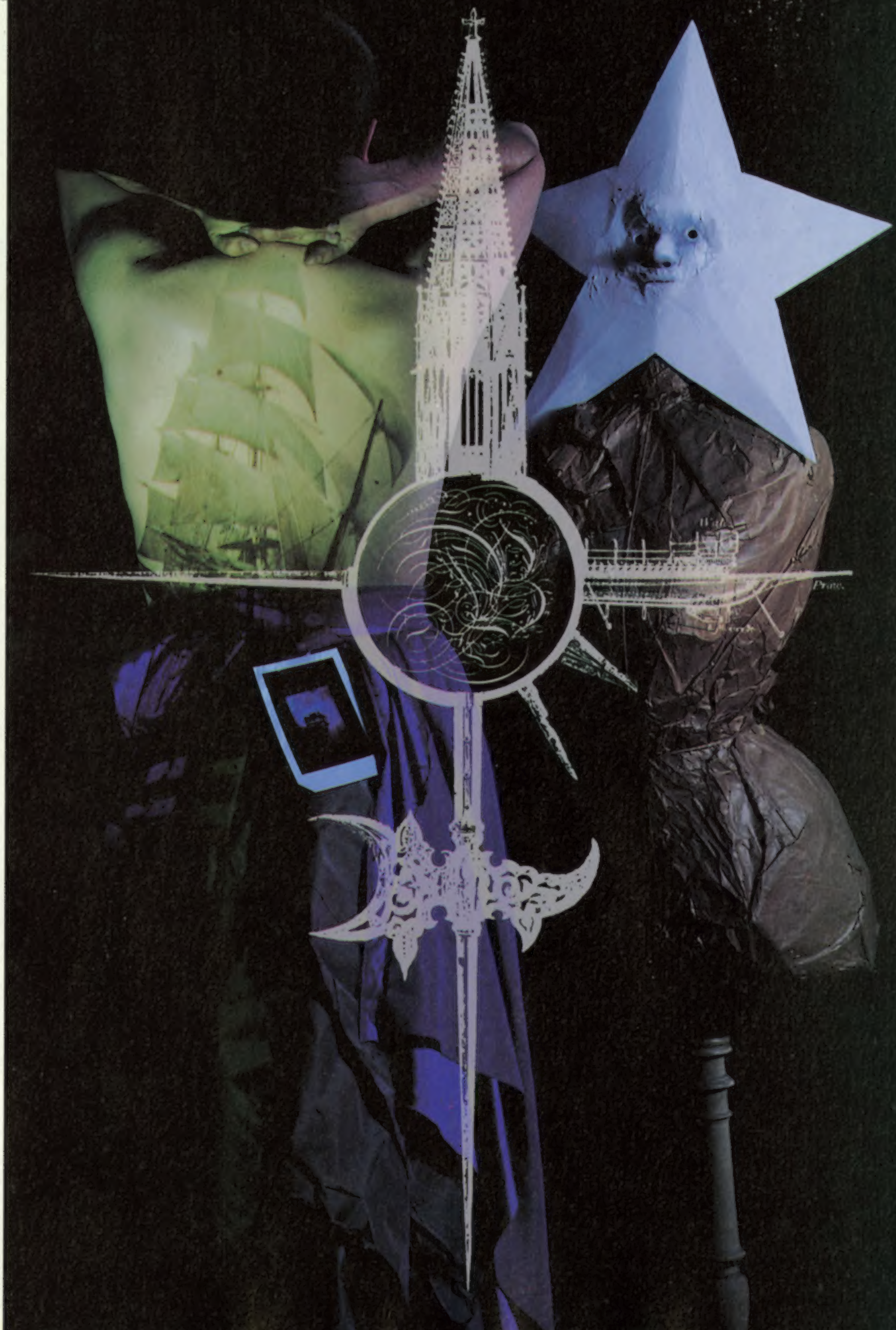

CALL ME JIM.

I'LL TELL YOU ALL A STORY.

IT'S A *TRUE* STORY, TOO, THOUGH YOU MAYN'T BELIEVE IT. AND THERE ARE TIMES *I* DON'T BELIEVE IT, THOUGH I WAS THERE, AND I SAW WHAT I SAW.

BEFORE I TELL IT, THOUGH, I'VE A QUESTION I WAS WONDERING IF SOMEONE HERE COULD ANSWER FOR ME.

WHERE ARE WE?

YOU'RE AT WORLDS' END. THE INN AT THE END OF THE WORLDS.

BUT WHAT *COUNTRY* IS THIS? WHAT... *PLACE*?

WORLDS' END IS ITS OWN PLACE, JIM.

"Y'SEE, THERE WAS A STORM, COME UP OUT OF NOWHERE AT MIDNIGHT--WE WERE SWEPT ONTO THE ROCKS, WHERE THERE SHOULDN'T'VE BEEN ROCKS NEITHER, NOHOW.

"A FEW OF US MADE IT INTO THE SHIP'S BOAT, AND WE PULLED ASHORE, BUT ONTO WHAT SHORE NONE OF *US* COULD TELL.

"AND THE STORM WAS STILL BLOWING, ONCE WE GOT ASHORE, BUT WE SAW THE LIGHTS OF THE INN AND IN WE CAME."

HARRY THERE, HE SAID THIS PLACE WAS FIDDLER'S GREEN WHERE THE GOOD SAILORS COME WHEN THEY DIE AT SEA.

BUT THAT'S ALL NONSENSE: LIKE THE STORIES OF THE GREAT SHIP, OR OF MOTHER CAREY.

SILLY STUFF.

AND I, FOR MY SINS, KEEP THINKING OF AN OPIUM DEN I WAS TAKEN TO IN SINGAPORE, WHEN I WAS YOUNGER, AND THINKING THAT PERHAPS I AM STILL THERE NOW, AND THAT EVERYTHING THAT HAS HAPPENED TO ME SINCE THEN WAS SOME STRANGE OPIUM DREAM.

SO WHERE ARE WE? AND WHAT KIND OF STORM IS THIS?

AND WHO ARE ALL OF YOU?

WE'RE TRAVELLERS, LIKE YOU. AND WE'RE STRANDED BY THE STORM, LIKE YOU.

YEAH. I HIT THIS WEIRD SNOWSTORM, IN JUNE, WOULDJA BELIEVE?

JUNE? BUT IT'S SEPTEMBER.

UH-UH. JUNE, 1993.

IT'S SEPTEMBER, 1914.

UM...

ENOUGH OF THIS GABBLING. I'M FOR THE STORY.

VERY WELL.

HERE'S MY YARN, AND, WHILE I'VE BEEN WAITING TO TELL IT FOR TWO YEARS, IT'S TRUE AS EVER I'M SITTING HERE.

Hob's Leviathan

◇ Neil Gaiman, writer ◇ Michael Zulli, penciller, pgs. 3-24 Dick Giordano, inker pgs. 3-24
◇ Bryan Talbot, penciller, pgs. 1, 2, & 24 ◇ Mark Buckingham, inker, pgs. 1, 2, & 24 ◇
◇ Danny Vozzo, colorist ◇ Todd Klein, letterer ◇ Karen Berger, editor ◇ Shelly Roeberg, assistant editor ◇

the SANDMAN

Featuring characters created by Gaiman, Kieth and Dringenberg

I WAS BORN IN 1899, IN SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA, THE ONLY CHILD OF A SEA-CAPTAIN AND OF AN ENGLISH WIDOW-WOMAN WHO RAN A SMALL BOARDING-HOUSE.

SHE DID NOT *TALK* OF MY FATHER;

AND I SUPPOSE THAT IT IS TO HER CREDIT THAT I WAS NEITHER ADOPTED OUT, NOR ABORTED, BUT THAT SHE BRAVED ALL THE SCANDAL AND SOCIETAL DISCOMFORT CAUSED BY THE ARRIVAL OF HER CHILD.

FROM MY *MOTHER* I INHERITED, I FANCY, A CERTAIN *WILFULNESS*. FROM MY FATHER I INHERITED A *WANDERLUST*, AND A FASCINATION WITH THE *SEA*.

SO IT WAS THAT, ON THE DAY OF MY THIRTEENTH BIRTHDAY, I CLAMBERED OUT OF MY BEDROOM WINDOW...

AND, DRESSED IN OLD CLOTHES I'D BEGGED AND BORROWED FROM FRIENDS, RAN DOWN TO THE DOCKS, WHERE, CLAIMING MYSELF AN ORPHAN, I SIGNED ABOARD *THE SPIRIT OF WHITBY*, EN ROUTE TO SINGAPORE.

I DIDN'T SMOKE AND I DIDN'T DRINK, WHICH MEANT THAT, BY THE TIME WE REACHED SINGAPORE, I HAD EARNED MYSELF A LITTLE MONEY.

TOO MANY SAILORS FINISH THEIR JOURNEY IN DEBT TO THE CAPTAIN, YOU SEE.

THE *NEXT* SHIP I SIGNED ON, THE *PYRAMUS*, WAS A DARK SHIP, CAPTAINED BY A BAD MAN, *AND*, WITH *REGRET*, I JUMPED SHIP ONE NIGHT, IN BOMBAY.

THERE WAS A MUTINY SHORTLY THEREAFTER, OR SO I HEARD, AND THE SHIP WENT DOWN WITH ALL HANDS.

I SIGNED ABOARD THE *SEA WITCH*, CARRYING TEA AND COTTON FROM BOMBAY TO LIVERPOOL.

SHE WAS A BEAUTIFUL SHIP. A BARQUENTINE.

THE CAPTAIN WAS HERBERT BURGRAVE.

HE WAS AN OLD MAN. MUST HAVE BEEN IN HIS FIFTIES.

WE'D BEEN FORCED TO WAIT AN EXTRA WEEK IN BOMBAY, FOR WHAT REASON I KNEW NOT, AND HE WAS IN A POOR TEMPER.

FINALLY ONE NIGHT A GENTLEMAN CAME ON BOARD AND ASKED TO SEE THE CAPTAIN.

HE WAS AN ENGLISHMAN, HIS BEARD TRIM AND NEAT, HIS EYES AND VOICE FRIENDLY, AND I SHOWED HIM TO THE CAPTAIN'S CABIN.

I HEARD VOICES RAISED. AFTER SOME TIME, THE CAPTAIN CALLED ME IN.

THIS IS MR. GADLING. HE'LL BE OUR PASSENGER ON THE VOYAGE. GOING BACK TO ENGLAND, HE IS.

MR. GADLING, THIS IS JIM. HE'S A HARD-WORKING LAD, AND HE'LL BE YOUR STEWARD FOR THE VOYAGE, WHEN HE'S NOT NEEDED ELSEWHERE.

GOOD TO MEET YOU, JIM.

I LIKED THIS MAN.

AND MR. GADLING: I'M NOT ONE FOR PASSENGERS. MOUTHS TO FEED, WHO DON'T PULL THEIR WEIGHT. THIS IS THE SEA WITCH, NOT THE SAVOY HOTEL, IF YOU GET MY DRIFT.

I DO INDEED.

JIM, SHOW MR. GADLING TO HIS CABIN. WE'LL BE SETTING SAIL AT DAWN.

THE CAPTAIN DIDN'T MUCH CARE FOR PASSENGERS. BUT MR. GADLING WAS PAYING HIS WAY, AND I GOT THE IMPRESSION THAT IT DIDN'T MATTER IF THE CAPTAIN LIKED IT OR NOT, HE COULD DO NOTHING ABOUT IT.

THE SKY WAS DAWN GRAY, AND A CHILL WIND CAME UP OFF THE WAVES, AS WE HAULED ON THE LINES THAT SET THE SAILS ALOFT.

THINK ON IT, AND YOU'LL BE THERE: THE CREAKING OF THE RIGGING, THEN THE MAGICAL MOMENT AS THE SAILS MAJESTICALLY LIFTED AND STRAIGHTENED AND FILLED...

I STOOD THERE SWEATING WITH THE LINE IN MY HANDS, AND THE SUN BROKE ABOVE THE HORIZON, AND THE GULLS MEWED AND THE GRAY SEA TURNED TO SAPPHIRE: AND I KNEW THIS WOULD BE A GOOD VOYAGE.

IN HALF A DAY WE WERE OUT OF SIGHT OF LAND.

SEA WITCH

IT'S A STRANGE LIFE, ABOARD A TALL SHIP. THE *SEA WITCH* WAS ITS OWN LITTLE WORLD.

THE SAILORS WERE FROM EVERY LAND UNDER THE SUN, OR SO IT SEEMED.

THERE WAS A GERMAN FROM HAMBURG, A TACITURN COVE WHO WOULD, WHEN RUMMED UP, TELL US HOW THE KAISER WOULD SOON PUT US ALL IN OUR PLACES.

THERE WAS A TALL NORWEGIAN, AND AN EQUALLY TALL SWEDE, WHO HATED EACH OTHER'S GUTS. THEY'D SHIPPED TOGETHER BEFORE, AND THERE WAS AN OLD QUARREL THERE, THOUGH I NEVER KNEW THE BONES OF IT.

NANCY

NANCY

AMONG THE SAILORS THERE WERE A NUMBER OF BLACKS--TWO WERE AFRICANS WHO HUNG TOGETHER LIKE BROTHERS, THE OTHERS WERE WEST INDIANS OR AMERICANS.

ONE OF THEM, NATHANIEL DAWNING BY NAME, WAS THE BEST SAILOR ON THE SHIP. HE WAS THE SECOND MATE, AND THE GENERAL OPINION ON THE *SEA WITCH* WAS THAT HE WOULD HAVE BEEN A CAPTAIN, IF ONLY HE WERE WHITE.

THERE WAS AN IRISH COOK --AND A GOOD ONE, A RARITY ON BOARD--WHO READ POETRY OF A NIGHT IN HIS HAMMOCK...

YEATS

AND A SCOTTISH ENGINEER WHO MINDED THE ENGINE THAT PUMPED OUT THE BILGES.

HIS NAME WAS CAMPBELL, BUT THE SKIPPER USED TO CALL HIM *DONKEYMAN*, BECAUSE OF THE DAYS WHEN A DONKEY WOULD WALK A TREADMILL IN THE HOLD, FULFILLING THE FUNCTIONS HIS ENGINES DID NOW.

THE FIRST MATE WAS A CALIFORNIAN NAMED CANBY. HE TOOK A SHINE TO ME, DID MR. CANBY. HE USED TO TELL ME:

I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOING *HERE*, LAD. SHIPS LIKE THIS AREN'T GOING ANYWHERE. TEN YEARS' TIME THE ONLY TALL SHIPS'LL BE IN MUSEUMS.

IT'S TOO *BIG* TO FIT IN A MUSEUM.

YEAH. FUNNY.

STEAM SHIPS. THAT'S THE FUTURE. WHO WANTS TO BE FORCED TO RIDE THE WIND?

I DO. I'VE BEEN ON A STEAM SHIP AND I DIDN'T LIKE IT ONE LITTLE BIT.

THEY'RE RUST-BUCKETS, MR. CANBY, THE LOT OF THEM. ALL THAT SMOKE.

AND WHAT'S THE POINT OF BEING A SAILOR, IF YOU'RE LIVING HIGH ABOVE THE OCEAN, INSTEAD OF COOL AND COMFORTABLE BELOW DECKS, COOLED BY THE WATER, LISTENING TO THE SEA GOING BY?

YOU'RE A ROMANTIC.

WHY BE A SAILOR, IF YOU'RE NOT?

THIS WAS ON THE FIFTH DAY OUT FROM BOMBAY.

MISTER CANBY!

YES, DAWNY?

OVER HERE--SHAKE A LEG!

RIGHT. YOU'D BETTER COME WITH, BOY.

THERE'S BEEN FOOD DISAPPEARING, YOU SEE, JIM, SO ME AND MISTER CANBY--

QUIET!

THE HOLD WAS STACKED HIGH WITH BALES OF COTTON AND CRATES OF TEA.

BACK HERE! GOT 'IM!

RIGHT THEN, YOU. WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY IT, EH?

I--I AM SORRY, SIR. HOWEVER, I WOULD APPRECIATE IT WERE YOU NOT TO HURT ME.

I'M NOT GOING TO HURT YOU. I'M TAKING YOU UP TO SEE THE CAPTAIN. NOW, HE MAY HURT YOU.

OH DEAR.

THE INDIAN GENTLEMAN WAS A STRANGE LITTLE DUCK. HE WAS VERY SMALL, AND VERY DELICATE OF FACE AND FEATURE, WITH THE MOST PECULIAR ALMOND-COLORED EYES.

A STOWAWAY?

YOU KNOW, GUNGA DIN, I DON'T TAKE PARTICULAR *KINDLY* TO STOWAWAYS ON MY SHIP.

ESTEEMED SIR, WHILE I MUST PERFORCE APOLOGIZE *PROFUSELY* FOR CONCEALING MYSELF ON YOUR SHIP, I WOULD NOT HAVE DONE SO HAD I NOT BEEN PLACED IN A GROSSLY UNTENABLE POSITION.

YOU SEE, I *QUITE* NEED TO GET TO LIVER-POOL.

WELL, YOU *WON'T* BE DOING IT ON THE SEA *WITCH*, DAMN YOUR LITTLE WOG EYES.

YOU'RE GOING TO BE PUT IN CHAINS IN THE LAZARETTE. WHERE, BECAUSE I'M *NOT* A CRUEL MAN, YOU'LL BE FED SHIP'S BISCUIT AND GIVEN WATER TO DRINK.

AND THEN I'LL HAVE YOU PUT OFF AT *ADEN*.

AND YOU CAN COUNT YOURSELF LUCKY THAT I DON'T HAVE YOU THROWN OVERBOARD.

CAPTAIN BURGRAVE? MIGHT I HAVE A *WORD* WITH YOU?

WHO? OH. IT'S *YOU*. HOLD YOUR BLASTED TONGUE, GADLING.

I'M AFRAID WE MUST *TALK* ABOUT THIS, CAPTAIN.

NOW.

ALL OF YOU, GET *OUT*. DAWNING, KEEP TIGHT A-HOLD OF THE LITTLE RAT'S-ARSE.

IT IS INDEED A PLEASANT DAY, GENTLEMEN: THE MAGNIFICENT AZURE SEA, THE BALMY BREEZE.

DOES IT NOT MAKE YOU FEEL MOST GOOD TO BE ALIVE?

SHUT UP, YOU.

BUT THIS IS A DAY OF MIRACLES: AFTER ALL, I HAVE SPENT DAYS IN THE STINKY HOLD, COMING OUT ONLY AT NIGHT.

IS IT NOT WONDERFUL, BOY?

DON'T TALK TO HIM, JIM.

JIM. AN EXCELLENT NAME. SHORT, IF I AM NOT MISTAKEN, FOR JAMES.

THERE. THAT'S ALL TAKEN CARE OF. YOU CAN LET HIM GO, GENTLEMEN.

CAPTAIN?

LET GO OF HIM, YOU SWABS. THIS IS OUR NEWEST PASSENGER. MR. GADLING'S TAKEN CARE OF HIS PASSAGE TO LIVERPOOL.

JIM? SHOW GUNGA DIN TO THE PURSER'S CABIN, AND TELL MR. STEWART HE'S BUNKING WITH THE MEN.

AND TELL HIS NIBS HOW LUCKY HE IS ON THE WAY.

HE'S NOT LYING. YOU ARE LUCKY.

LAST SHIP I WAS ON, THEY FOUND A STOWAWAY. THE SKIPPER HIT HIM ASIDE THE HEAD WITH AN IRON BELAYING PIN, AND OVER THE SIDE HE WENT.

THEN IT IS A GOOD THING THAT I CHOSE TO TRAVEL ON THE SEA WITCH.

THE NEXT FEW WEEKS WERE... WELL, PERFECT, I SUPPOSE.

THE TRADE WINDS BLEW STEADILY. WE MADE BETTER SPEED THAN WE HAD ANY RIGHT TO, AND EVEN BOUGHT OURSELVES SOME LOAFING TIME.

THE SUN SHONE AND THE CHICKENS KEPT LAYING, AND THE COOK GAVE ME A BOOK CALLED SALT WATER BALLADS, AND I EVEN BEGAN TO LEARN BY HEART THE ONES I LIKED MOST OF ALL.

...Y' KNOW, THERE'S A **LOT** WE DON'T KNOW ABOUT THE SEA. I BEEN IN SHIPPING, ON AND OFF, OH, **DONKEY'S** YEARS NOW. I DON'T KNOW A BLESSED THING MORE THAN I DID ABOUT WHAT'S UNDER THERE.

THERE'S MORE SEA THAN LAND, AND THERE'S A LOT GOES ON ON LAND THAT'S PRETTY BLOODY MYSTERIOUS, EH?

AH, YOU ARE TALKING ABOUT **MERMAIDS** THEN, THE COLD FISHY WOMEN WITH CLAMMY KISSES AND SCALY BREASTS?

LADIES WHO **LURE** YOU BY CLASPING YOU TO THEIR COLD BOSOMS AND THEN MAKE YOU GO "NOW I AM DEAD OH DEAR OH ME" BY DRAGGING YOU BENEATH THE BRINY?

NOPE. I'M TALKING ABOUT WHAT'S UNDER **THERE.**

AH, YOUNG MAN. YOU ARE LOOKING MOST **REMARKABLY** WELL. IS HE NOT LOOKING WELL, MISTER GADLING?

IF YOU SAY SO.

AH, BUT I **DO** SAY SO.

AH YES, THE ENTERTAINING ENGLISH **SLANG.** "LET US GO UP THE APPLES AND THE PEARS TOGETHER." HAHAHA.

BUT I TELL THE TRUTH.

LISTEN.

ONCE THERE WAS A KING, WHO HAD A WIFE WHOM HE LOVED MORE THAN LIFE ITSELF...

WE ARE PONDERING THE **SEA** AT THIS MOMENT, AND I WAS ALSO TELLING MISTER GADLING ABOUT THE FICKLENESS OF WOMEN.

AND I WAS TELLING HIM THAT HE WAS TALKING OUT OF HIS KHYBER.

"MORE THAN LIFE ITSELF. THIS IS NO PRETTY TURN OF PHRASE. LISTEN...

ONE DAY, THERE CAME A HOLY MAN TO THE PALACE. HE WAS THIN AS A SCARECROW, HIS BEARD WHITE AS PEARL, HIS SKIN BLACKENED AND GNARLED, LIKE BURNT WOOD, BY THE SUN.

HE DEMANDED TO SEE THE KING.

THE GUARDS REFUSED HIM ENTRY, WHEREUPON HE TOOK A KNIFE FROM HIS LOINCLOTH, AND, WITH ONE HARD SWIPE, CUT OFF HIS LEFT HAND AT THE WRIST.

THEY WERE MOST ASTONISHED AT THIS ACTION, MORE SO WHEN THEY REALIZED THAT THERE WAS NO BLOOD ISSUING FROM THE WOUND.

THE HOLY MAN PICKED UP HIS HAND, WHICH WAS CRAWLING AROUND IN THE DUST, SCUTTLING AND SKITTERING LIKE A SCORPION, AND FASTENED IT ONCE MORE TO HIS WRIST, WITH A MYSTIC GESTURE.

"LIGHT OF THE GODS ON EARTH," HE BEGAN, "I *AM*, AS YOU CAN SEE, A HOLY MAN. AND I HAVE, THROUGH TRIALS UNDREAMED OF, AND THROUGH ALCHEMY, AND THROUGH PRAYER, OBTAINED FOR MYSELF THIS *FRUIT*. IN APPEARANCE IT PARTAKES OF BOTH THE FIG AND THE APPLE.

MAGICALLY, HE WAS WHOLE AGAIN.

"IT IS, HOWEVER, THE FRUIT OF LIFE, AND WHOEVER EATS OF IT SHALL LIVE FOREVER."

"NOW," HE SAID. "TAKE ME TO YOUR KING."

AND THEY DID.

"SO WHY DO *YOU* NOT EAT OF IT?" ASKED THE KING, WHO WAS NOBODY'S FOOL BUT HIS OWN.

"FOR THREE REASONS. *FIRSTLY*, I AM AN OLD MAN; IMMORTALITY SHOULD BE GIVEN TO THE YOUNG, AND THOSE IN GOOD HEALTH; *SECONDLY*, I DESIRE TO REMAIN UPON THE KARMIC WHEEL OF DEATH AND REBIRTH, ON MY PATH TO EVENTUAL REWARDS FAR GREATER THAN LIVING FOREVER."

"AND THIRDLY?"

"THIRDLY, I AM TOO *SCARED* TO TASTE OF IT."

"HOW CAN YOU ASSURE ME," ASKED THE KING, "THAT THIS IS NOT POISONOUS? THAT YOU ARE NOT TRICKING ME?"

THE OLD MAN ORDERED A MONGOOSE BROUGHT TO HIM, AND FED IT, WITH HIS HANDS, A TINIEST SLICE OF THE FRUIT.

THEN HE ORDERED A FIRE KINDLED AND THE ANIMAL TOSSED INTO THE FURNACE.

IN TIME THE FIRE BURNED DOWN, AND THE KING SAW THE MONGOOSE QUESTING ABOUT INSIDE, UNHARMED BY THE FLAMES.

THEN THE KING KNEW THAT THE MAN WAS TELLING HIM THE TRUTH, AND HE TOOK THE FRUIT, WITH THANKS.

HE ORDERED THAT GOLD BE BROUGHT FOR THE HOLY MAN, BUT THE HOLY MAN REFUSED IT AND WENT ON HIS WAY.

THE PRINCE PONDERED THE GIFT OF IMMORTALITY.

NOW, HE HAD A WIFE WHOM HE LOVED, AS I SAID, MORE THAN LIFE ITSELF: FOR HE DECIDED THAT THIS WIFE SHOULD RECEIVE THE GIFT OF THE FRUIT, AND NOT HIM.

THAT NIGHT HE SUITED DEED TO WORD, AND GAVE HIS WIFE THE FRUIT OF LIFE.

ALAS, HIS WIFE WAS AS UNFAITHFUL AS ANY WOMAN, AND SHE HAD A LOVER, WHO WAS A CAPTAIN OF THE PALACE GUARD.

AND THAT NIGHT, BECAUSE SHE LOVED HIM, SHE GAVE HER CAPTAIN THE FRUIT OF LIFE.

THERE WAS A PROSTITUTE IN THE TOWN-- NOT A RAGGEDY-ARSED PROSTITUTE, BUT A COURTESAN, LIKE THEY HAD IN THOSE DAYS-- WITH WHOM THE CAPTAIN WAS INFATUATED, AND WHOSE FAVORS HE BOUGHT WITH GEMS AND GOLD AND SILVER THAT HE COZENED FROM THE QUEEN.

AND TO HER HE BROUGHT THE FRUIT, UNTOUCHED.

SHE WAS VERY BEAUTIFUL. BUT SHE WAS UNCERTAIN ENOUGH OF THE FRUIT, AND OF ITS PROVENANCE, AND DESIROUS ENOUGH OF EARTHLY REWARD, TO HIE HERSELF TO THE PALACE.

SHE OFFERED THE FRUIT TO THE KING.

HE TOOK IT FROM HER, AND, ONCE SHE HAD TOLD HIM HOW SHE HAD OBTAINED IT, ORDERED HER TO BE REWARDED.

THEN HE HAD THE QUEEN AND HER LOVER BROUGHT TO HIM, AND HAD THEM BOTH KILLED --*WITHOUT* TORTURE, THOUGH, FOR HE HAD LOVED HER *MORE* THAN LIFE ITSELF.

HE DRESSED HIMSELF IN THE CLOTHES OF THE POOREST BEGGAR IN HIS REALM, AND, MAKING HIS BROTHER KING IN HIS STEAD, HE LEFT THE PALACE.

HE ATE THE FRUIT, AND WALKED OUT OF THE CITY INTO THE *RUKH*, NEVER TO BE SEEN AGAIN.

THERE. SO YOU SEE THE POINT I MAKE CONCERNING WOMEN AND THE FICKLENESS OF WHAT YOUR MISTER KIPLING HAS SO JUSTLY CASTIGATED AS A SPECIES MORE DEADLY THAN THE MALES?

I THINK IT'S A STUPID STORY.

HE'S GOT A POINT THERE, OLD FRIEND. WOMEN AREN'T UNFAITHFUL.

IT'S *PEOPLE* ARE UNFAITHFUL. AND MEN TEND TO GET A LOT MORE OPPORTUNITY THAN WOMEN TO MESS ABOUT.

"WHAT WOULD YE LADIES? IT WAS EVER THUS. MEN ARE UNWISE AND CURIOUSLY PLANNED, THEY HAVE THEIR DREAMS AND DO NOT THINK ON US WHAT TAKE THE GOLDEN ROAD TO SAMARKAND."

SORRY?

IT'S *POETRY*. I READ IT IN A BOOK.

...CCC...

WHY DOES THE WATER GLOW LIKE THAT?

THE DREAM MAGIC OF THE SEA.

PHOSPHO-RESCENT ALGAE.

ANYWAY, THE STORY WASN'T *TRUE*.

NO?

NOBODY LIVES FOREVER. *LAST* SHIP *I* WAS ON MY FRIEND HARRY FELL FROM THE RIGGING. WE WRAPPED HIM IN SAIL AND THREW HIM OVERBOARD.

FIRST HE FLOATED, THEN HE TIPPED UP AND SANK.

YOU'RE A DEEPONE, YOUNG JIM.

WHAT?

LIKE THE SEA, YOU'VE GOT HIDDEN DEPTHS.

DO YOU EVER *WONDER* ABOUT WHAT GOES ON UNDER THERE? THERE'S *MORE* SEA THAN THERE IS LAND, AFTER ALL. AND WE NEVER SEE MORE THAN THE TINIEST FRACTION OF IT.

THERE'S A *STORM* ON THE WAY.

HOW CAN YOU TELL, MISTER GADLING?

YEARS OF EXPERIENCE.

THERE WAS A STORM THE NEXT DAY, AND HALF THE CHICKENS WERE WASHED OVERBOARD.

I ENJOYED WORKING FOR MISTER GADLING: HE WAS A FUNNY MAN. AND HE WAS CLEVER, TOO. HE'D BEEN ON THE SHIP LESS TIME THAN I HAD, BUT HE KNEW EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENED ON BOARD. HE'D TELL ME THINGS ABOUT THE CREW.

F'R EXAMPLE, HE KNEW ABOUT MR. CANBY'S GIN BUSINESS, WHICH WAS MORE THAN THE SKIPPER DID.

HE KNEW ABOUT THE HISTORY OF SHIPPING, TOO. OLD BOATS AND SHIPS. ONE EVENING, HE TOLD ME ABOUT THE SLAVE SHIPS: HOW ALL THE SLAVES WOULD BE LINKED TOGETHER BY ONE LONG CHAIN, SO IF THEY SIGHTED A NAVAL SHIP THEY'D JUST THROW THE SLAVE AT THE END OF THE CHAIN OVERBOARD, AND THE REST WOULD FOLLOW, INTO THE SEA...

WHAT YOU GOT *THERE*, BOY?

IT'S MY LUCKY STONE. I WAS GIVEN IT IN SINGAPORE. IT'S MEANT TO STOP YOU BEING DROWNED.

A LUMP OF CHALCEDONY WON'T STOP YOU DROWNING. BUT I'LL *TELL* YOU HOW NOT TO DROWN, IF YOU *LIKE*.

REALLY? HONEST?

SURE.

DON'T DROWN.

HUH?

YOU JUST DON'T *DROWN*. I'VE DONE IT HALF A DOZEN TIMES. IT'S *EASY*, ONCE YOU GET THE HANG OF IT. *DON'T DROWN*.

VERY FUNNY, MISTER GADLING.

IT'S NOT A JOKE, JIM. ALTHOUGH IF YOU TAKE IT TOO *SERIOUSLY*, YOU'RE IN DEEP TROUBLE.

I'M GOING UP ON DECK, I THINK. BIT OF FRESH AIR NEVER HURT ANYBODY.

CHAL-CED-ONY? COR.

BETWEEN MR. GADLING'S CHEST AND THE WALL I FOUND AN OLD TIN PHOTOGRAPH, LIKE THEY USED TO HAVE, OF TWO STIFF-LOOKING PEOPLE. A MAN AND A WOMAN. THE MAN LOOKED ENOUGH LIKE MR. GADLING TO BE HIS FATHER.

I PUT IT DOWN ON THE CHEST.

To My Bobby
Till death, my sweet.
your own Elspeth

NEXT DAY I CLEANED HIS CABIN, BUT THE PHOTOGRAPH WAS GONE.

AFTER THE STORM THE WINDS ABANDONED US.

WE WERE BECALMED, AND THE SAILS HUNG LIMP AND LIFELESS FROM THE MASTS.

THE FIRST DAY OF IT, NOBODY SAID ANYTHING MUCH.

THE CREW DID *WIND* THINGS, EACH IN THEIR OWN WAY.

SOME OF THEM WHISTLED, IDLY, AS IF THEY WERE HAPPY, AS THEY WENT ABOUT THEIR BUSINESS.

WHISTLED FOR THE WIND.

NAT DAWNING HAD A LUMP OF PINK CORAL WRAPPED IN WHITE SEAL-SKIN, WHICH HE HUNG FROM THE BOW-SPRIT.

IT DID NO GOOD.

THE SHIP STILL HUNG, SEEMINGLY SUSPENDED, ON A SEA THAT WAS FLAT AND REFLECTIVE AS GLASS.

NEXT MORNING, THE SKIPPER HIMSELF WALKED DOWN TO THE STERN OF THE SHIP, AND THREW HIS OLDEST SHOES IN THE WATER.

OF COURSE IT WORKS. IF YOU *REALLY* NEED WIND, THE SKIPPER HAS TO THROW OLD SHOES OVERBOARD.

AH. A PROPITIATORY SACRIFICE. HOW REMARKABLY SAGACIOUS!

I THOUGHT IT HAD WORKED, AT FIRST, BECAUSE THE SEA SOON DARKENED IN THE EAST.

BUT THEN WE REALIZED IT WAS...

FISH!

LOOK AT THEM! IT'S *FISH!*

HE WAS RIGHT.

THE SEA WAS ALIVE WITH FISH -- FISH OF ALL MANNER AND SHAPE AND SIZE. DOLPHINS LEAPED AND SPLASHED, THROWING UP SHOWERS OF TINY FISHES.

THE WATER CHURNED AND GLITTERED SILVER: A SEAFUL OF FISH, ALL OF THEM SWIMMING TOWARDS THE WEST.

ON THE SKIPPER'S URGING, WE LOWERED A NET, AND HAULED ABOARD MORE FISH THAN WE COULD HAVE EATEN IN A MONTH OF SUNDAYS, FROM HUGE COD TO TINY GLITTERING JEWEL-FISH WHOSE NAMES I NEVER KNEW...

THERE WAS EVEN A SHOAL OF FLYING FISH, WHICH I THOUGHT UNKNOWN IN THOSE PARTS -- SOME OF WHICH LANDED ON THE DECK OF THE *SEA WITCH*.

MR. GADLING PICKED ONE UP AS IT WRITHED AND FLOPPED ON THE DECK, AND HE THREW IT BACK INTO THE THRASHING WATER.

AND THEN THE FISH WERE PAST US, GONE TO THE WEST. THE WATERS EMPTIED, WENT FROM SILVER TO BLUE, AND FROM BLUE TO BLACK.

LAND HO!

ARE YOU *MAD*, MAN? THERE'S NO LAND HERE!

BUT SKIPPER--

I CAN *SEE* IT.

WHERE *IS* IT?

OVER *THERE*-- *SEE*? THAT'S *FUNNY*-- IT'S *GONE*...

AND THEN THE DECK LURCHED AND TIPPED AND BUCKED, AND THE WORLD WENT MAD.

MISTER GADLING?

WE SAW IT.

THE SEA SERPENT. WE SAW IT.

SO?

SO WE'VE GOT TO TELL EVERYONE. I MEAN, IT'S REAL. IT'S NOT IMAGINARY. WE SAW IT...

'COURSE WE DID.

A HARD WIND CAME UP, THEN, AND FILLED THE SAILS. THE CAPTAIN AND MR. CANBY BEGAN TO SHOUT AT US.

WE MADE GOOD TIME TO ADEN.

MISTER GADLING? YOU SAW THE SEA SERPENT, DIDN'T YOU? WE ALL DID.

'COURSE I DID, JIMMY.

BUT NO ONE'S *TALKING* ABOUT IT. WHEN I ASK THE OTHER SAILORS ABOUT IT, THEY JUST CHANGE THE SUBJECT.

YOU SURPRISED BY THAT?

YES. I S'POSE I AM. I MEAN, WE COULD TELL THE WORLD. THEY'D KNOW THERE REALLY *WAS* SEA SERPENTS.

WELL, WE'LL DOCK IN ADEN THIS AFTERNOON.

SOON AS THERE'S SHORE LEAVE, YOU COULD GO INTO THE CITY, FIND SOME NEWSPAPER CORRESPONDENT AND TELL HIM WHAT WE SAW.

WOULD HE *BELIEVE ME?*

MM. YOU COULD BRING HIM BACK TO THE SHIP. HE COULD ASK AROUND. THE TRUTH WOULD PROBABLY COME OUT EVENTUALLY.

MISTER GADLING? WHY HASN'T ANYONE SEEN IT *BEFORE?*

MAYBE THEY *HAVE*: THERE'S TALES OF SEA SERPENTS, AFTER ALL.

BUT THE SEA'S A *BIG* PLACE, JIM, AND *DEEP.*

F'R EXAMPLE, NOBODY'S SEEN A GIANT SQUID THAT I KNOW OF. WE JUST SUPPOSE THERE HAVE TO BE SOME, BECAUSE THEY'VE SEEN THE HUGE SUCKER MARKS ON THE SIDES OF WHALES.

BIG PLACE.

LOTS OF SECRETS DOWN THERE.

WE MADE ADEN LATER THAT DAY. WE WERE TO TAKE ON PROVISIONS IN ADEN, BEFORE SAILING ON FOR THE SUEZ CANAL.

I WAS GIVEN SHORE LEAVE THE FOLLOWING AFTERNOON, AND I WENT INTO THE CITY, ALONG WITH SOME OF MY SHIPMATES.

THE HORIZON WAS BEGINNING TO LIGHTEN WHEN I RETURNED TO THE SHIP.

...TIME, YOU DON'T OWE ME ANYTHING. THERE'S FEW ENOUGH OF US AROUND. *LEAST* WE CAN DO IS WATCH OUT FOR EACH OTHER.

YOUR SEA WITCH, SHE IS *SO* BEAUTIFUL A BOAT.

I'M OUT OF SHIPPING, NEXT TIME AROUND. PRINTING AGAIN, I THINK. OR PUBLISHING, MAYBE.

HULLO, JIM.

GOOD EVENING, YOUNG JAMES. AH ME. IT IS *PAST* THE HOUR WHEN ALL WELL-MEANING FOLKS ARE SAFE IN THE ARMS OF MISTER MORPHEUS. FOR MYSELF, I AM UP THE WOODEN HILLOCK TO BEDFORD-SHIRE.

I SHALL LEAVE YOU TWO YOUNG PEOPLE TOGETHER.

SO. YOU'VE BEEN ASHORE, THEN?

YES.

WHO'D YOU *TELL*?

TELL?

ABOUT THE SEA SERPENT.

NOBODY.

I DIDN'T *THINK* YOU'D SAY ANYTHING, LIKE I SAID. WE'VE ALL GOT SECRETS.

AND YOU DON'T WANT TO DRAW ATTENTION TO YOURSELF.

ISN'T THAT *RIGHT*, GIRL?

...HOW DID YOU KNOW?

YOU'RE NOT THE FIRST LASS I'VE KNOWN IN MY TIME WAS PASSING, NOR EVEN THE FIFTIETH. THERE ARE THINGS YOU GET TO RECOGNIZE, GIVEN ENOUGH TIME.

SYKES TRANSPORT

SOME OF IT'S THE VOICE, AND SOME OF IT'S THE HANDS, AND A LOT OF IT'S LEARNING TO SEE WHAT YOU SEE AND NOT WHAT YOU *THINK* YOU SEE, IF THAT MAKES ANY SENSE.

IT'S NOT *FAIR*. *MEN* CAN BE SAILORS. WHY CAN'T *GIRLS*?

BECAUSE *LIFE'S* NOT FAIR, I SUPPOSE. THERE, AND THAT'S PROFUNDITY FOR YOU.

WHAT'S YOUR REAL NAME THEN, JIM?

MARGARET. MAMA USED TO CALL ME PEGGY.

SHE'S A LOVELY SHIP ISN'T SHE?

IS SHE *REALLY* YOURS?

SMART GIRL. YOU WAS LISTENING. YES, SHE'S MINE.

SeaWitch

WELL, UNTIL WE DOCK IN LIVERPOOL SHE'S MINE. THEN I HAVE THE SAD DUTY OF TELLING THE COMPANY THAT MY GREAT-UNCLE, ROBERT GADLING, DIED OF SOMETHING PROPERLY TROPICAL IN CALCUTTA.

HE'S LEFT ME HIS SHARES IN THE COMPANY, HAS UNCLE BOB. BUT I'LL SELL THEM ON -- NO INTEREST IN BOATS HAS YOUNG ROBBIE, BACK FROM TWENTY YEARS ABROAD.

THEN THERE'LL BE NOTHING LEFT COULD LINK ME WITH THE OLD MAN.

HOW OLD *ARE* YOU, SIR?

OLD ENOUGH TO HAVE LEARNED TO KEEP MY MOUTH SHUT ABOUT SEEING A BLOODY GREAT SNAKE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE OCEAN.

YOU WON'T TELL ANYBODY ABOUT ME, WILL YOU, MISTER GADLING?

CALL ME HOB.

GIVEN TIME, YOU'LL SPIN A YARN OF WHAT WE SAW IN THE OCEAN. GIVEN TIME I'LL TELL THE TALE OF THE HANDSOME CABIN BOY.

BUT GIVEN ENOUGH TIME AND THE RIGHT AUDIENCE, THE DARKEST OF SECRETS SCUM OVER INTO MERE CURIOSITIES.

ANYWAY.

NO ONE'LL BELIEVE *EITHER* OF US.

I LAST SAW MR. GADLING ON THE DOCK IN LIVERPOOL. HE LEFT WITH THE INDIAN GENTLEMAN, AND I NEVER SAW NEITHER OF THEM AGAIN.

I'VE NOT DARED TELL MY TALE BEFORE, AND IF I THOUGHT THIS INN WAS A REAL PLACE, AND ALL OF YOU ANYTHING MORE THAN PHANTOMS AND OPIUM GHOSTS, I'D NOT HAVE TOLD IT NOW.

AND I SHIPPED FROM LIVERPOOL TO RIO, AND FROM RIO TO THE AZORES AND FROM THERE TO BOSTON AND NOW TO NEWFOUNDLAND, AND SAVE FOR MR. GADLING THERE WAS NEVER A MAN-JACK THOUGHT ME ANY-THING BUT A TRUE-BORN BOY--'THOUGH THERE WERE A FEW CLOSE SHAVES.

BUT I'M GETTING TOO OLD FOR THE TRICK, WHICH TROUBLES ME, FOR THE SEA IS IN MY BLOOD LIKE A FEVER AND I DON'T KNOW HOW I CAN LEAVE; THOUGH I KNOW MY TIME ON THE SEA, LIKE THE TALL SHIPS', DRAWS TO ITS END. SO IT MAKES NO DIFFERENCE TO ME WHETHER YOU BELIEVE A WORD OF IT OR NOT.

AND WHEN, SOME DAY SOON, I FORSAKE THE SEA--LIKE A SAILOR LEAVING HIS LADY-LOVE ON THE SHORE--I SHALL TAKE ANOTHER NAME TO ME AND BUILD ANOTHER LIFE.

BUT--FOR NOW--YOU CAN CALL ME JIM.

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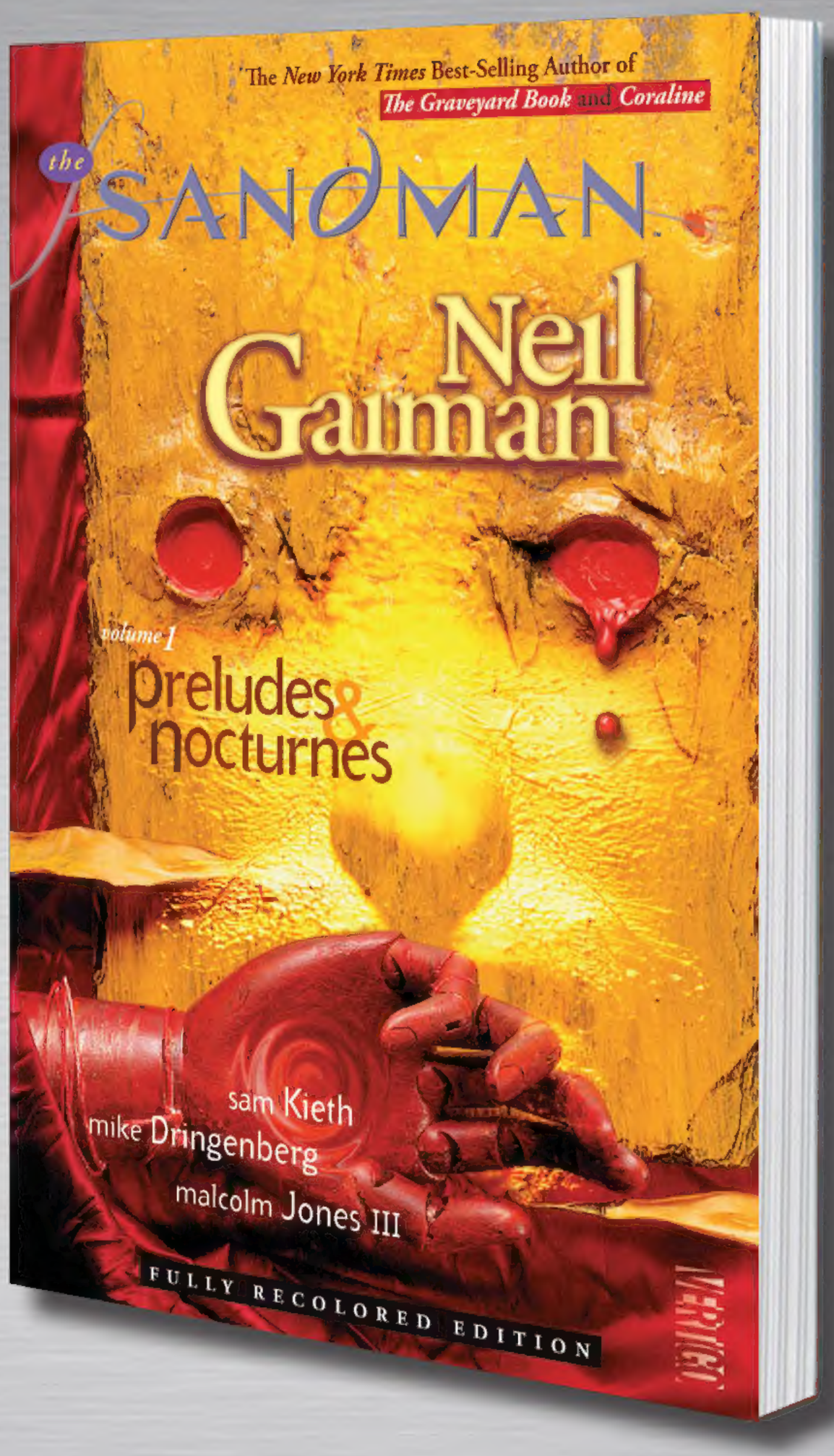

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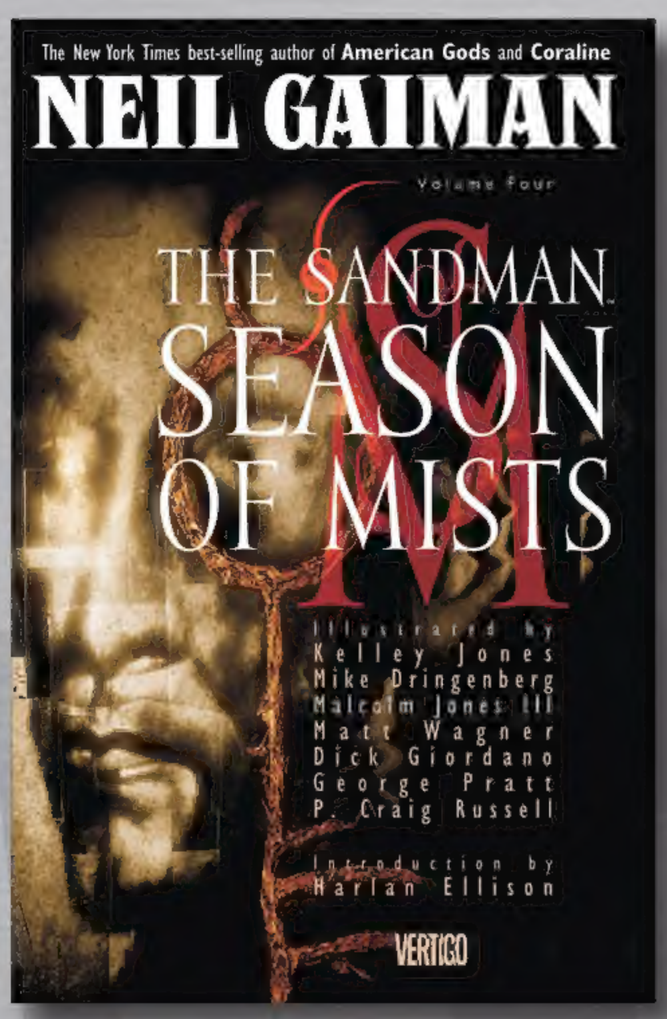

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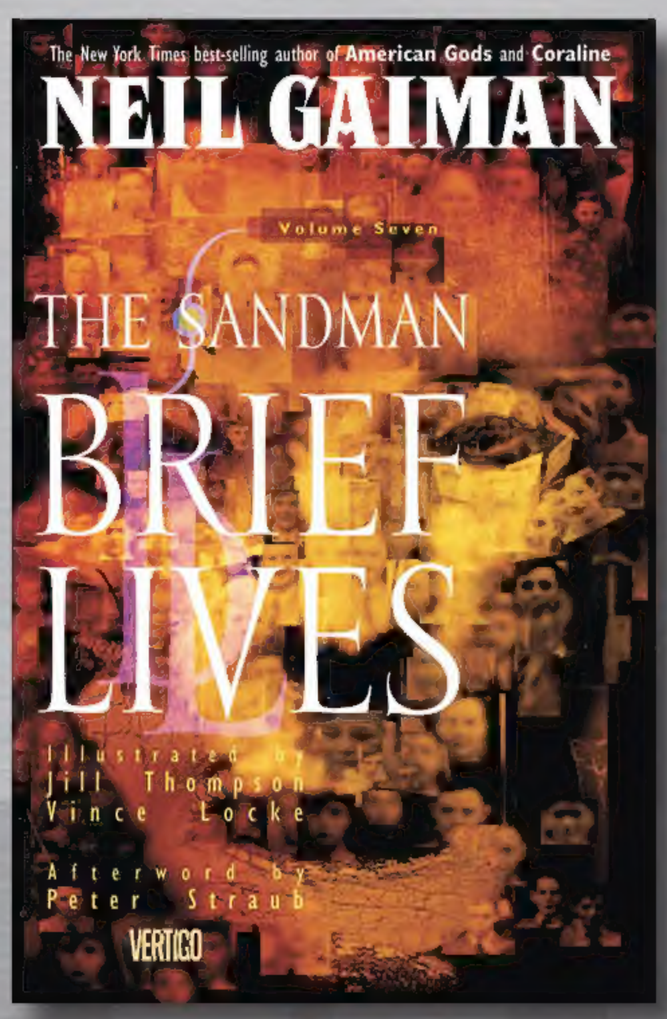

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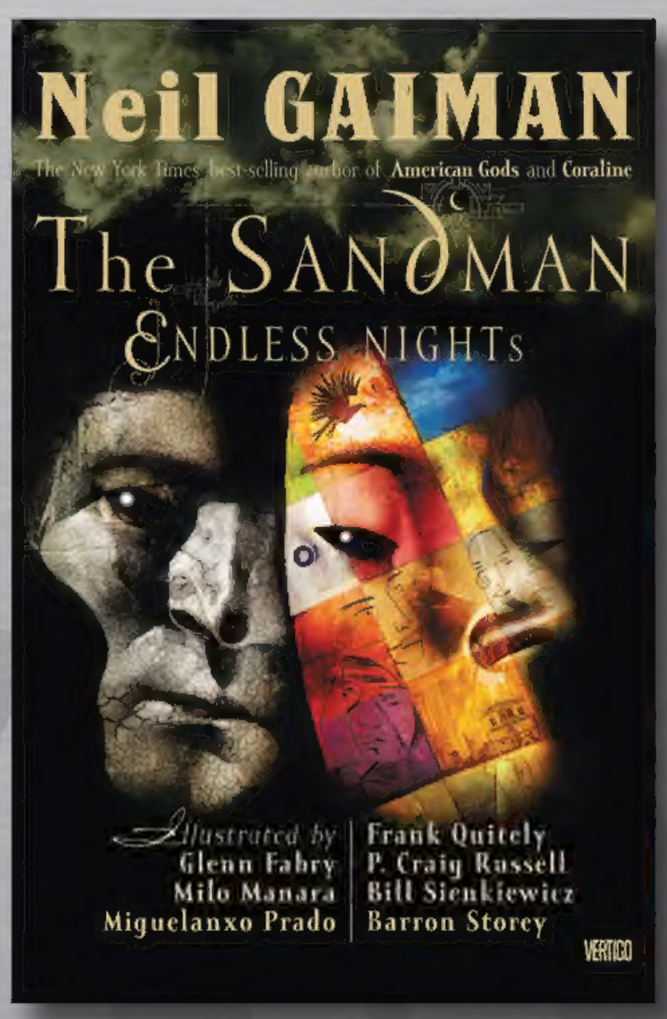

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